

May 9, 2006

Local EO Officers:

The meeting began with a review of the new EO website and the documents that are now accessible on the website. The *Complaint and Grievance Guide* and the *Discrimination Complaint Information Form* are documents developed for processing discrimination complaints as required under 29 CFR 37. To further assist with compliance of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the regulation, we've designed a new complaint log for use by all local EO Officers. Procedures for completion were reviewed during the meeting resulting in recommendations for additional development to take place.

The following dates have been confirmed for future quarterly technical assistance sessions:

Thursday, June 29, 2006
Thursday, November 30, 2006
Thursday, February 22, 2007

As a component of our schedule, we strongly encourage participation of all local EO Officers at the USDOL 2006 National EO Conference, scheduled August 1-4, 2006 in Arlington, VA. The conference is an excellent opportunity to obtain valuable information regarding designing an effective program and to assist with our efforts in administering the various equal opportunity and nondiscrimination laws.

An introduction and overview of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) was provided to the group, including the viewing of an awareness video titled, "Breaking Down the Language Barriers, Translating Limited English Proficiency into Practice". Each local EO Officer shared information regarding known resources within their areas to ensure meaningful access to services and programs for individuals with limited English proficiency. The discussion resulted in identifying an array of resources in the regions including hiring bilingual staff, partnering with community organizations and language support from a local Mayor's office in one region. An additional resource, now available to areas, is Language Line. Several of you shared having limited to no knowledge of procedures for utilization. We will look into this and provide all local EO Officers information currently available.

During the meeting we reviewed the LEP.gov website, focusing on the special tabulation of Census data on specific populations. This resource will aid in the initial assessment of workforce regions regarding the LEP population eligible to receive services. The initial assessment is the first phase in the development of an effective plan for language assistance for LEP individuals. ***Per the guidance memorandum dated May 29, 2003, "...Policy Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons..." which supplants federal guidance with the same subject, dated January 17, 2001, copies of both distributed during the meeting, we will begin developing a LEP plan.*** Additional information regarding how Census data is obtained and further tabulated, as a resource for planning services for LEP

individuals, was presented by Bill Niblack, Research Manager, MERIC/Department of Economic Development. Finally, the document titled "*Limited English Proficiency Resource Document: Tips and Tools from the Field*" and a sample copy of a model LEP plan was shared during the meeting.

A recent Civil Rights Center (CRC) update was distributed for review, indicating the focus of compliance reviews conducted by CRC will be service delivery to persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency. The update included a reported increase in allegations relating to persons with limited English proficiency, the basis of discrimination being National Origin, being brought to CRC's attention. Also, through Freedom of Information requests, CRC reported legal advocacy groups are seeking information on services provided by state agencies to persons with limited English proficiency.

Before adjourning, several of you shared issues requiring more clarification, specifically, relative to your budgets, whether the state agency includes an appropriation for funding EO activities at the local level. We will review and prepare a response for all. Also, we agreed to share the following websites for future compliance assistance needs:

www.LEP.gov

www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/LEP/glossary/

www.doleta.gov/reports/CensusData.eta_default.cfm

With your assistance, we will continue to ensure effective communication regarding the provisions of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity within the operational framework of the One-Stop system. As always, your continued interest and contributions are appreciated. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns and mark your calendars for the next scheduled meeting, 10am – 3pm, June 29. An additional, detailed notice will follow in the next few weeks.

Juanita D. Reynolds, MWDP

Equal Opportunity Officer
Division of Workforce Development
421 East Dunkin Street
P.O. Box 1087
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1087
573.751.2428 fax 573.751.4088
juanita.reynolds@ded.mo.gov
<http://www.great hires.org>